

18 MAR 1948

339

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

GENERAL

- 5-5
1. Soviet armed aggression against Iran held unlikely--US Embassy Moscow expresses its view that the USSR will not this year make any aggressive move with its armed forces likely to embroil it in major hostilities with the western powers. The Embassy therefore does not anticipate any "major effort" in Iran and does not foresee any likelihood of an invocation of the 1921 treaty or an occupation of Azerbaijan.

In reply to the Department of State's query concerning the possible effect of a declaration accompanying the conclusion of the Atlantic Pact, the Embassy asserts that a carefully worded statement expressing the interest of the US in the security of Greece, Turkey, and Iran would usefully supplement the Atlantic Pact and remind the Kremlin that the US is not dropping its guard anywhere. The Embassy believes it to be "almost essential" that the British join in issuing such a statement.

(CIA Comment: CIA believes that any Soviet action against Iran at this time will largely consist of fomenting disturbances, particularly in Azerbaijan.)

2. Bunche reports Israeli intransigence threatens talks--According to the US delegation at the UN, Mediator Bunche has reported that an armistice between Lebanon and Israel is being blocked solely by Israeli intransigence on the subject of the removal of its forces from Lebanon. The Israelis reportedly demand Lebanese permission to retain forces in Lebanon until Syria concludes an armistice. Bunche has declared that he feels so strongly on this matter that unless Israel changes its position within the next few days, he will inform the Security Council that Israel is deliberately blocking a Lebanese agreement and will seriously consider withdrawing altogether from the armistice talks.

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3. USSR seeks to prolong Austrian treaty talks--US representative Reber at the Austrian treaty talks in London reports that in a recent private interview Soviet representative Zarubin gave the impression he wanted to use every excuse to prolong the present negotiations indefinitely. According to Reber, Zarubin apparently sought to imply that an agreement on autonomy for the Slovenes in Austria would reduce the difficulty of the Yugoslav frontier issue. Reber indicates that although Zarubin urged that the talks be turned to other disagreed issues, he has agreed with the British and French representatives to continue the present pressure in order to gain some hint concerning eventual solutions on frontiers and reparations.

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4. Greek move to guarantee frontiers suggested--US Ambassador Cannon in Belgrade believes that, in connection with recent Macedonian developments, the Greeks should gain the diplomatic initiative by proposing that a UN or four power guarantee should be made of present Balkan borders. Cannon suggests that Greece could then forego its claims to southern Albania provided that Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria would agree to the finality of their own borders. Cannon points out that such a move would at least place the Cominform on the defensive by forcing a Soviet decision concerning its stand on the present borders of Yugoslavia as well as those of Greece. Cannon expresses the view that a US-UK demarche to Bulgaria on the Macedonian question would not be effective at this time.

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- 2 -

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